



Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2012



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2012 SCCCMH CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



Senator Roy McDonald

The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health will present Senator Roy McDonald with the 2012 Citizen of the Year Award at our Annual Dinner and Fundraiser on Thursday, May 3, 2012. Senator McDonald is being recognized not only for his efforts to raise awareness about the needs of people living with mental illness, but also for sponsoring and supporting legislation to actually make a difference for people in our community.

Roy McDonald has been a leader among his colleagues regarding mental illness and autism awareness. In his first year as the Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Chairman, McDonald carefully guided the autism insurance legislation through each chamber of the legislature and saw the Governor sign the bill into law. The new law will guarantee insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism. He also sponsored legislation to guarantee that informational booklets would be given to emergency first responders on persons with autism, so that they would be more adequately prepared to react in those situations.

He is sponsoring various bills to help people living with mental illness. For example, he is sponsoring bills to provide a mental hygiene legal service to certain patients or residents of residential healthcare facilities; to increase the availability of professionals to perform evaluations regarding a defendant's mental fitness to proceed to trial in a criminal proceeding; to provides for behavioral health wraparound demonstration projects combining services through the office for people with developmental disabilities, the office of mental health and the department of health; to allow a nurse practitioner, acting within their lawful scope of practice, to admit a patient to an inpatient mental health unit on a voluntary or involuntary basis; and there are many more bills, too.

In an effort to highlight groups and organizations that provide services to individuals with disabilities and their families, Senator Roy McDonald was instrumental in organizing Disabilities Awareness Day at the

(Continued on Page 5, Senator McDonald)

SCCCMH Board of Directors

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CHAIRPERSON'S NOTES

By Peggy Lounsbury

The SCCCMH welcomes two new members of our Board of Directors, James Ash and Ann Diller. Jim is a nurse for the Saratoga Co. Mental Health Clinic. Ann is a clinical social worker and says she is "semi-retired". Both bring the mental health professionals' perspective to our board. Unfortunately, we must say good bye to Sue Filburn and Susan Moseley. Both ladies served the Citizens Committee with passion and their contributions will be missed.

"Gaining Insight" Website and Artwork Gaining International Recognition.

SCCCMH Board member, Amber Christian Osterhout, developed a web page that is to increase awareness of the realities of mental illness, www.Gaining-Insight.com. Here are examples of the people from all over the world using Amber's artwork:

Dartmouth University is using her "Psychosis" to illustrate a study about the use of smart phones in assessing and treating schizophrenia. Link to article:

<http://now.dartmouth.edu/2012/03/smartphones-can-aid-people-with-schizophrenia/>

- A German paper used, "Psychosis", "Lack of Insight" as well as her poster series for an article about stigma and mental illness
- Western Governors University requested to use "Psychosis" for a presentation about the arts and education (exactly what the purpose of her work is)
- University of Birmingham is using "Psychosis".

Here are some quotes:

"As you can see I work for the government and I thought some of the paintings would be great for our veterans to see and reflect on." –Cristy Gamez-Galka, Ph.D., Local Recovery Coordinator, Micheal E. DeBaKey VA Medical Center

"In my twenty-five years leading NAMI Buffalo, I've seen dozens of films, heard hundreds of presentations, and read a library of books on the topic of mental illness. "Gaining Insight" ranks in the top five of those experiences..." –Lynne

WANTED: Board Members

The SCCCMH Board of Directors has two openings. Lay people from the community, mental health advocates, and others who want to ensure that the needs of people living with mental illness in Saratoga County are met are needed for our Board of Directors. The Board meets the first or second Thursday of the month at 5:30 - 6:45 pm at the Transitional Services Association administrative building in Saratoga Springs. If you are interested, please contact Chairperson, Peggy Lounsbury at plounsbury@saratogacare.org or 583-8371 for more information or to arrange to be a guest at a Board of Director's meeting.

WANTED: Members

Please join or renew your membership in the SCCCMH now for the 2012-2013 membership year that started April 1, 2012. SCCCMH has a "pay what you will" approach to membership **Please rejoin now!** Even if you are unable to provide financial support, please complete and return the form so we can keep our mailing list up-to-date and help give voice to the mental health needs of our community.

SCCCMH Grants Available to Organizations

The SCCCMH awards monetary grants to not-for-profit organizations that provide services to people with mental illness.

Awards are generally up to \$1,000 and are distributed in December, March and June. For an application and more information, go to our website www.scccmh-saratoga.org. **June 1st** is the next deadline for grant proposals to be reviewed at the January SCCCMH Board meeting. Grant recipients and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in July.



IN THE NEWS...

The Afghanistan Tragedy

Arlington, VA., March 20, 2012 – The National Alliance on Mental Illness ([NAMI](#)) has issued the following statement by Executive Director Michael J. Fitzpatrick to address issues reflected in the case of U.S. Army Sgt. Robert Bates:

"After 20 years of U.S. military experience in the Middle East and in light of the recent killing of 16 Afghan villagers by a soldier who news reports indicate may have experienced mental health problems, it is clear that the system of identification, diagnosis and intervention for ongoing [invisible wounds](#) of soldiers serving America, as well as concern, care and accountability, is not what it should be."

NAMI deploras any and all unnecessary killing at home or abroad. We recognize the suffering of all victims of war, including their families and loved ones.

NAMI offers expertise and [partnership](#) in developing protocols that will lead to education of those who are in positions of leadership, responsibility and accountability, at all levels in our armed forces, with the purpose of helping to avoid future tragedies.

NAMI also believes that strong programs of education and advocacy, coupled with accountability at all levels of management and command in both civilian and military settings, will lead to removal of the stigma of seeking help for [mental illness](#) and invisible wounds and will lead to healing and recovery. **Continued...**

We pledge to continue our efforts for the good of our warriors, our veterans and their families and for all of those who are affected by the invisible wounds of war and mental illness."

Soldiers helped by WarHorse program

MICHAEL VEITCH

sports@saratogian.com

Article from "Saratogian" Published: Tuesday, March 13, 2012

This program is making a difference that is life-changing, and maybe even life-saving. At Saratoga WarHorse, located on Ruggles Road a few miles east of Saratoga Springs just off Route 29, the WarHorse Project is making a priceless contribution to veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Founder of the project and Chief Executive Officer is Bob Nevins, himself a Vietnam veteran and a man who is tackling the issues of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) head-on. He served as a medevac pilot in the 101st Airborne and was wounded in action in 1971. Many soldiers, at a tender age, eagerly volunteer for the United States, and are confronted with an overwhelming assault on their senses in war. Nevins and Lane see the WarHorse Project as a way to deal with PTSD, with the emphasis on the soldiers. "They've lost all trust," said Nevins. "The connection we do with horses provides unconditional acceptance and this helps them to reset circuit-breakers."

Along with former thoroughbred trainer Marilyn Lane, they have created a program that brings together horses and suffering veterans, the former offering

Continued on page 6, see War Horse

SCCCMH Newsletter is the official publication of the Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health, P.O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, New York.

www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org

The views expressed in this newsletter represent the opinions of the authors and do not represent the official position or opinions of the SCCCMH unless specifically stated.

The SCCCMH Board of Trustees reserves the right to decide the content of the newsletter, and reserves the right to review, revise, shorten or deny articles for publication. Articles submitted for publication consideration should not be longer than 250 words unless the author is specifically invited to do so. Also, submitting the copy as a Microsoft Word document, or typed within the body of an e-mail message is preferred. Send articles to the Newsletter Editors e-mail address. Articles not submitted electronically can be mailed to the address above.



THE VIEW FROM HERE

THE BENEFITS OF DAY PROGRAMS FOR THOSE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

By Amanda R. Blodgett

Living with a mental illness can be difficult at times. I should know, I live with one myself, but one thing every program, that those of us living with a mental illness enters, encourages us to do is have a day program. This could be volunteering, going to Friendship House, or Unlimited Potential to name a few. Some experiences are good and some are not so good. But the one thing I have found people agree on is socialization.

I think socialization is a key element in getting through our mental illness. I saw a saying on a shirt once, "It's when you are standing alone that you know who is standing with you." In the fight against mental illness it can feel like we are alone, but when we stand up and fight by getting out into our community and doing things, then a whole new world opens up to us.

I asked two individuals to help me with this article: one was Bill Griffith who attends Friendship House and another was a person, who wishes to remain nameless, attends Unlimited Potential. You will also have my views expressed in this article because I volunteer at Saratoga Hospital in Medical Records and the Nursing Home as my day program. Now let's venture into the world of day programs.

First, let us consider if we enjoy our day programs. Bill said he enjoys Friendship House very much because it teaches him skills to deal with the symptoms of his mental illness and he adds you can use these skills in everyday life. My friend U.P. says she doesn't always look forward to it because some days there is not enough work and some days there is too much work and she feels that U.P. is not fair when it comes to who gets work. However, she feels it keeps her busy. Myself, Thursdays are my favorite day at Saratoga Hospital because I know one Nursing Home Resident in particular will have the deck of cards ready for me to play "War" with her. Also I know the residences will be excited after I come back from lunch to go downstairs to the lobby and are waiting for warm weather to



go outside. I feel similar to my friend working at U.P., though, when I am in Medical Records because it is more like a job. Although, my friend U.P. does get paid for what she does and I don't, there is "work" to be done in Medical Record. I guess it's easier for me to suffer the days with little work or lots of work because I know I am doing something for someone. When I volunteer in Medical Records, I know that if I didn't do the work, then my contact person's valuable time would be taken up by work that can easily be past on to someone with little explanation on what needs to be done. Day programs offer us something to usually look forward too.

Now, let us consider if we really do look forward to them. Bill says he does because Friendship House makes the clients feel like they are a part of it. And my U.P. informant tells me that sometimes she does look forward to going because of the socialization. The socialization piece comes up again. In my volunteering, it is a way for me to socialize outside of the mental health community. I live in TSA so my roommate and people who live in the program with me are people living with mental illness. I go to the Saratoga County Mental Health Clinic and I have also attended Friendship House, so in a treatment setting, I know many people in the mental health community. My volunteering is a way for me to be somebody other than just another person with a mental illness. So again, socialization is the key.

For the most part, I can say the day programs are a very good thing. I know the person I chose from U.P. may seem a little down on it, but I do think that having some place to go helps her. I think it wise that programs encourage us to have day programs. It gets us to be a part of something like Bill said, we socialize like my U.P. person made a point to say, and it gives us something to look forward to like I do every Thursday morning, when I feel it's hard to get out of bed. I do it because I know that my Nursing Home friends will miss that "War" game or going down to the lobby. I think personally that day programs make people living with a mental illness feel more normal!

***Become a Part of the Voice
of Saratoga County Mental
Health Community.***

Join SCCCMH Today!



Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
DBSA Saratoga County



Stewart's Shops®



THE GRAMECY GROUP

2nd Annual Walk for Mental Health Awareness

Saturday, May 19, 2012, 11:00 am
(Registration begins at 9 am)
Saratoga Spa State Park

Support the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Saratoga County by walking for mental health awareness. All proceeds of the walk will go to funding the DBSA activities, including support group meetings, special events, training, & advocacy efforts.

For more information, or
To register or to donate, go to
www.DBASaratogaCounty.com
Call (518) 580-1064



great savings. But most important, this is a risk-free fundraiser and an opportunity to raise awareness of mental illness. The spring 2012 "Community Days" are April 27 and 28. Please consider buying a coupon book from the Citizens Committee by contacting Peggy Lounsbury at plounsbury@saratogacare.org or by calling 583-8371.

(Continued from Page 1, Senator McDonald)

Wilton Mall this past December. Senator McDonald wanted people to know that there are outlets to help them through difficult times and that suicide is preventable. So, he is providing public service announcements about the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. He recently organized a public hearing on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in combat veterans to gain information on PTSD in order to improve early diagnoses, increase access to treatment, and provide crisis and support services.

Senator McDonald was also recognized by the National Alliance on Mental Illness - New York State as the 2012 Legislative Champion for his work as Chairman of the New York State Senate Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee.

Join us in honoring Senator Roy McDonald at the SCCCMH Dinner and Fundraiser!

BON TON Community Days Helps the SCCCMH

The SCCCMH raised a significant amount of money by selling the BonTon Coupon Books in the fall. BonTon sponsors two "Community Days" events each year. One in the spring and one in the fall. They encourage non-profit 501(c)3 organizations, like the SCCCMH, to sell the coupon books for \$5 and keep 100% of the proceeds.

The coupon books have about \$200 in savings during the "Community Days" sale. Always in the coupon book is a \$10 coupon to use towards any purchase. So, the buyer makes \$5 just by purchasing the coupon book. The non-profit organization can also have an informational table and sell coupon books right in the store. So, this gives the Citizens Committee an opportunity to raise awareness of our organization and the needs of people living with mental illness. Bon Ton is a great store to shop, and the coupon books offer

Continued....

Saratoga County Network of Mental Health Professionals and Advocates Spring Meeting

The next meeting of the Saratoga County Network of Mental Health Professionals and Advocates (SCN-MHPA) will be on **Thursday, April 26th, 4:30 – 5:30 pm** at Saratoga Hospital. Available resources for suicide prevention is one agenda item. If you would like more information or plan on attending, contact Peggy Lounsbury at plounsbury@saratogacare.org or 583-8371.



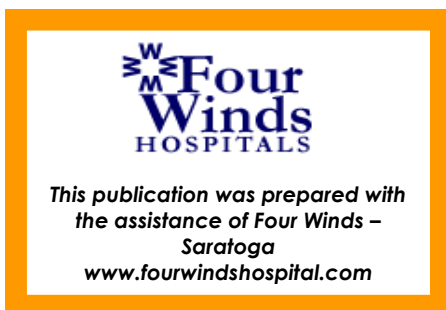
Domestic Abuse: You are Not Alone

Most of us think of domestic violence as a black eye, a broken bone, or an emergency room visit after an assault; sometimes this is the case. However, even more often victims of intimate partner violence endure abuse that isn't so readily apparent—bruises hidden by clothing, emotional scars from threats, intimidation and constant belittling, and restricted options due to financial control or social isolation. Current or past abuse is highly correlated to adult mental health symptoms. Chronic abuse and/or childhood trauma history are correlated with depressive disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, and chemical dependency.

Intervention to end the violence and counseling to understand the effects of abuse can reduce symptoms associated with victimization. Support services may include: (1) Helping her/him to identify issues of power and control within the relationship. (2) Identifying support services including legal supports, community resources and social supports. (3) Supporting her/him to make informed choices and decisions with regard to the relationship. (4) Developing a safety plan to minimize the risk of future victimization. (5) Identifying behavior changes to promote self-esteem, independence and reduce victimization. (6) Developing new coping strategies and support systems.

According to the Family Violence Prevention Fund, "Routine and multiple screenings ... markedly increase the identification of domestic violence... Routine screening, as opposed to indicator-based screening, will increase opportunities for identification and intervention with patients presenting with symptoms not generally associated with domestic violence."¹ So the challenge is to ask about intimate partner violence not only upon intake or when there's a significant indicator, but on a regular basis. Often a victim will disclose only after she/he has developed a trust relationship with a provider.

Continued....



With financial support from the Saratoga County Citizens' Committee on Mental Health, Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services of Saratoga County (DVRC) is providing outreach and resources to help mental health professionals ore effectively screen for intimate partner abuse and link those in need with DVRC's support services such as: legal advocacy, case management, financial literacy training, support groups, Safe Pet Partnership, and housing programs for domestic violence survivors with disabilities.

If you need help or know someone who needs help due to domestic abuse, you are not alone. Contact DVRC for assistance. All services are confidential, non-judgmental, and free of charge.

Office hours 518-583-0280
24-hour hotline at 518-584-8188

¹ Preventing Domestic Violence: Clinical Guidelines on Routine Screening. Family Violence Prevention Fund



(Continued from page 3, War Horse)

its natural unconditional love and the latter needing a restoration of trust.

The Veterans Administration has sanctioned the WarHorse Project, and it is currently in the funding phase. "We've got world class horses here assisting world-class veterans," said Nevins. Nevins has compiled extensive research from experts in mental health and psychiatry, with the goal of getting funding for the program.

"We hope to make Saratoga the national model and focus of the WarHorse Project," said Nevins. "We want this to develop into a businesslike and professional program." Saratoga WarHorse welcomes inquiries, be it online at www.saratogawarhorse.com, or with a call to Bob at 744-3600 or Marilyn at 257-0648. Introduce yourself and ask about the project. You will see soldiers cry, finally letting go and silently communicating with the horse. Something spiritual is happening, and you'll also see the soldiers smile. And you will know that the WarHorse Project is mending broken threads in a way that benefits us all.



For more information, contact:

Chairperson: Peggy Lounsbury
E-mail: plounsbury@saratogacare.org
Phone: 518-583-8371

Or visit our website: www.SCCCMH-Saratoga.org

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM FOR YEAR: April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

SCCCMH Mission: The SCCCMH is a non-profit, charitable organization [501(c)3] whose mission it is to:

Program Development and Enrichment: Award grants of approximately \$1000 to agencies and programs in Saratoga County that provide services to people with mental illness or have mental & emotional needs so they can enrich existing programs or expand services.

Education: Provide affordable educational opportunities for mental health professionals and consumers of mental health services.

Advocacy: Advocate for improved mental health care and services by lobbying government and elected officials.

Increase Awareness: Increase public awareness of the needs of individuals with mental illness. E.g., increase access to public transportation, decrease stigmas or stereotypes.

Member Benefits: Membership fees support the development of mental health services in Saratoga County through grants, educational opportunities, and lobbying, as well as the publication of the biannual SCCCMH Newsletter.

More members. More power. More Benefits.

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

New Member Membership Renewal Remove my information from the SCCCMH mailing list.

First Name _____ Last _____ Prefix/Suffix: _____

Address Home Work _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: Home Work _____

If you want to receive the newsletter and other notices from the SCCCMH via e-mail, please provide your e-mail address:

If you are a provider of mental health services and would like to be included in the Saratoga County Network for Mental Health Professionals, then check here:

If you would like to participate in a mental health consumer workshop that is organized by consumers, then check here:

Membership fee is based on a “pay what you will” basis (Check One):

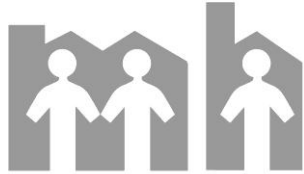
- I want to be a member, but I am unable provide financial support.
- I want to be a member. I will consider a contribution at a later date.
- I want to be a member, enclosed is my tax deductible donation of: ___\$10 ___\$25 ___\$35 Other.

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO: SCCCMH. Do not send cash in the mail. Appreciated if submitted before **April 30th**.

MAIL TO: SCCCMH, P.O. Box 820, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

MAKE SURE THE VOICE OF THE SARATOGA COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY IS HEARD.....JOIN SCCCMH TODAY!!

SARATOGA COUNTY



CITIZENS COMMITTEE
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

www.scccmh-saratoga.org

*For more information about
the SCCCMH, contact Peggy
Lounsbury, Chairperson,
at 518-583-8371*

*The Saratoga County Citizens Committee for Mental Health (SCCCMH) is a non-profit, charitable organization that **distributes grant money** to agencies and programs in Saratoga County so they can enrich existing programs or expand services for people with mental illness. The SCCCMH also provides affordable **educational opportunities** for professionals and consumers, **advocates** for improved mental health care and services; and is committed to **increasing public awareness** of the needs of people with mental illness.*

Saratoga County Citizens
Committee for Mental Health

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